

Council still dealing with flooding issues

by IDALITA RASO

MENTOR - Flooding woes stemming from the Feb. 28 storm were a hot topic at Mentor City Council's April 5 meeting. City Manager Kenneth Filipiak said city officials have spoken directly to about 200 of the 270 flooded property owners. While he said each situation was unique, there were a few commonalities between the properties that suffered flooding.

"The factor the homes have in common is little elevation between the sanitary sewer and homes' basement floors," said Filipiak.

Resident Sharon Easter was one of the estimated 270 properties that suffered flooding damage, standing before council with her story.

"On Feb. 28 I smelled smoke coming from my basement. Upon opening the basement I found water coming all the way up to the top step," said Easter.

She said the flooding did permanent damage to her appliances and personal belongings. Making matters

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days.

Easter said she contacted the city and someone came to her residence to find out if the water came from the sanitary sewer line or from Easter's own front yard. The city worker promised the city would contact her, but she never got a response. After contacting City Hall, Easter said she was told no one from the city had a record of anyone coming out to her residence. Easter said she has not been able to get answers from City Hall

or the help she needs.

"The word is out," Easter said. "It's not better in Mentor, it's just wetter—I've been awake every night, losing sleep. Every time I hear rain or thunder I worry I may flood again."

City Council President Robert Shiner assured Easter that the city would get to the bottom of what caused her basement to flood and get her the assistance she needs.

Easter asked council if the city could do something

to curb flooding issues throughout the city.

Filiapiak said since the flooding, city workers have been doing just that.

"It's important for certain residents in certain areas of the community to understand they're going to be more susceptible to this than others," Filipiak said.

He also said the city might not be able to do much in terms of large-scale public fixes, but can help homeowners prepare for the next time flooding issues come around.

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Filiapiak explained that Lake County Department of Utilities officials have expressed interest in conducting dye testing for affected areas and perhaps begin a program to allow for installation of backflow prevention devices on sanitary sewer laterals within the city.

Councilman Edward Walsh (Ward 3) suggested high wall plumbing, which according to Walsh, would eliminate at least 90 percent of the problem.

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